

Message Text

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FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN, LONDON,
OTTAWA, MOSCOW, PARIS, TOKYO, EC BRUSSELS FROM TEHRAN
APRIL 15:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEHRAN 3817

DEPT PASS ERDA FOR SIEVERING

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: TECH, IR

SUBJ: IRANIAN ATOMIC ENERGY CHIEF REBUKES SUPPLIER NATIONS

REF: TEHRAN A-76, APRIL 15,1976

1. SUMMARY: DR. AKBAR ETEMAD, PRESIDENT OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY ORGANIZATION OF IRAN, EXPRESSED STRONG MISGIVINGS OVER THE EFFECTS OF THE LONDON SUPPLIER MEETINGS UPON THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION IN GENERAL AND THE PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER IN IRAN IN PARTICULAR. REF AIRGRAM, WHICH PROVIDES GENERAL BACKGROUND ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM, TOGETHER WITH ETEMAD'S INFORMAL BUT CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED REMARKS TO A SMALL INTERNATIONAL GATHERING IN TEHRAN, WILL HOPEFULLY PROVIDE USEFUL INSIGHTS TO U.S. NEGOTIATORS WHO WILL BE MEETING WITH ETEMAD NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON IN AN ATTEMPT TO REACH A NEW AGREEMENT ON CIVIL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY. ETEMAD LEFT NO DOUBT IN MINDS OF

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HIS AUDIENCE THAT HE WAS SPEAKING FOR THE SHAH AND THAT HE WAS

ATTEMPTING TO GET AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE ACROSS, PARTICULARLY TO THE U.S. END SUMMARY.

2. DR. ETEMAD WAS GUEST SPEAKER AT 13 APRIL LUNCHEON OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP OF TEHRAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND TOOK THE OCCASION TO SPEAK CANDIDLY ABOUT OFFICIAL IRANIAN PERCEPTION OF CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIERS AND THEIR CLIENTS. HIS COMMENTS AND THE MOOD THEY PROJECT ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR ETEMAD'S VISIT TO U.S. NEXT WEEK FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION ON U.S.-IRAN BILATERAL.

3. ETEMAD NOTED PREPONDERANCE OF INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES AT LUNCHEON AND SAID THAT HE WISHED TO ADDRESS THEM ON SUBJECT CLOSEST TO HIS HEART, I.E., INCREASING RESTRICTIONS PLACED BY LONDON SEVEN UPON EXPORT OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY. (OF THE SEVEN SUPPLIER COUNTRIES, REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S., CANADA, U.K., GERMANY, AND JAPAN WERE PRESENT.)

4. HE BEGAN BY DESCRIBING GOALS OF NPT AS: (1) PREVENTING SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY, (2) PROMOTING EXCHANGE OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES, AND (3) NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT. HE CHARACTERIZED NPT AS WORKING FAIRLY WELL UNTIL 1974, DESPITE FACT THAT IT IS DISADVANTAGEOUS TO NON-NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES. EXPLOSION OF INDIAN PNE CAUSED WORLDWIDE ALARM AND A STIFFENING OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES TOWARDS THE HAVE-NOTS.

5. IRAN SOUGHT ADMITTANCE AS OBSERVER TO LONDON DELIBERATIONS OF 1975 BUT WAS TOLD THAT ARRANGEMENTS UNDER WHICH THE SEVEN WERE MEETING DID NOT PERMIT PRESENCE OF OBSERVERS. HE QUESTIONED APPROPRIATENESS OF SECRET TALKS WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OF NUCLEAR RECIPIENT COUNTRIES. HE BELIEVES THAT THE IMPOSITION BY THE SUPPLIER STATES OF GUIDELINES ON NUCLEAR EXPORTS ABOVE AND BEYOND INTERNATIONALLY APPROVED CONTROLS OF NPT HAS LED TO GREAT UNEASE AMONG THE RECIPIENT STATES, WHO FEEL THEY HAVE BECOME THE VICTIMS OF A CONSPIRACY. HIS MOOD NOW IS ONE OF INCREASING FRUSTRATION AND IRRITATION THAT MATTERS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO IRAN ARE BEING DECIDED BEYOND ITS CONTROL AND WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ITS WISHES. (A SLIGHT QUAVER IN HIS VOICE CARRIED THE STRENGTH OF HIS FEELING ON THIS SITUATION.)

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6. HE IS PESSIMISTIC OVER FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH SUPPLIER STATES (REFERENCE, THOUGH UNSTATED, WAS TO US AND GERMANY). MOST PARTICULARLY, ETEMAD FEELS THAT LONDON GUIDELINES FORCE ALL SUPPLIERS TO TREAT ALL RECIPIENT NATIONS IN A UNIFORMLY RESTRICTIVE MANNER, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE FORMER TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MANY DIFFERENCES AMONG THE LATTER IN POLICIES, CAPABILITIES, AND SITUATIONS. (IRAN OBJECTS STRENUOUSLY TO BEING TREATED AS THOUGH IT HAD NUCLEAR WEAPONS ASPIRATIONS AND TO BEING PENALIZED

BECAUSE IT HAPPENS TO BE SITUATED IN A GENERALLY UNSTABLE PART OF THE WORLD). HE BELIEVES THAT THE IMPOSITION OF GUIDELINES, RATHER THAN FURTHER INHIBITING NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION AS INTENDED BY THE LONDON SEVEN, WILL DRIVE THOSE ON THE VERGE OF GOING NUCLEAR TO DO SO BEFORE THEY OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE IN ORDER TO ENJOY INSIDE STATUS. HE FEELS THAT THE RESULT HAS BEEN TO SOW MISTRUST RATHER THAN TO BUILD CONFIDENCE.

7. ETEMAD REITERATED FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS DEMONSTRATING IRAN'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD: (1) EARLY SIGNER AND RATIFIER OF NPT, (2) ACCEPTANCE OF IAEA CONTROLS, (3) INITIATOR OF NUCLEAR FREE ZONE FOR MIDDLE EAST, (4) LACK OF INCENTIVE TO GO NUCLEAR (USSR TOO BIG ON NORTH AND OTHER POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES CAN BE CONTAINED WITH CONVENTIONAL ARMS), AND (5) CHOICE OF LWR TECHNOLOGY, WHICH IS LEAST SUITABLE FOR A WEAPONS-ORIENTED PROGRAM.

8. HE SAID IRAN IS SMARTING FROM RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH ONE SUPPLIER (READ GERMANY). EARLY NEGOTIATIONS FOR A BILATERAL WERE GOING SMOOTHLY UNTIL ONSET OF LONDON SUPPLIER MEETINGS, DURING WHICH THEY WERE RECESSED. SINCE THEN, NEGOTIATIONS HAVE RUN INTO "GREAT DIFFICULTIES."

9. ETEMAD SAID IRAN HAD EMBARKED UPON AN AMBITIOUS NUCLEAR PROGRAM PARTLY TO DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO FOSSIL FUEL CONSERVATION. THIS DESPITE ABUNDANT SUPPLIES OF PETROLEUM, WHICH SHOULD LAST 30-40 YEARS. IRAN'S PROGRAM IS A VERY EXPENSIVE UNDERTAKING WHICH THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD APPEARS NEITHER TO UNDERSTAND NOR TO APPRECIATE. UNDER THE NEW CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY THE LONDON GUIDELINES IRAN MAY HAVE TO RETHINK ITS POLICY. IT WOULD BE A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE COUNTRY TO HAVE TO ABANDON ITS NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM.

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10. RE REPROCESSING, ETEMAD UNDERLINED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM AND IRAN'S NEED EVENTUALLY TO HAVE ITS OWN REPROCESSING FACILITIES. PARTICIPATION IN OR USE OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT TO BE BUILT IN PAKISTAN, WHICH FRANCE RECENTLY AGREED TO SELL TO THAT COUNTRY, WAS NOT ATTRACTIVE BECAUSE IRAN DOES NOT WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED ON SUCH A SENSITIVE UNDERTAKING WITH PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, WHO HAS IN PAST CLEARLY SIGNALLED HIS INTENT TO DEVELOP A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY. HE DOES NOT FEEL THAT IDEA OF A REGIONAL, MULTI-NATIONAL REPROCESSING PLANT IS PRACTICAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WHERE RELATIONS BETWEEN NEIGHBORS ARE FREQUENTLY NOT GOOD, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE POLITICALLY AND TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE ELSEWHERE. HE ALSO MENTIONED THE DIFFICULTY OF SHIPPING HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE SPENT FUEL OVER GREAT DISTANCES AND THE NECESSITY OF IRAN ACCEPTING BACK NOT ONLY THE REPROCESSED MATERIALS BUT ALSO THE DIRTY WASTE WHICH NO OTHER COUNTRY WOULD AGREE TO STORE

FOR ETERNITY. HELMS UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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